

Embracing Multiple Water Worlds: Policy and Practice of Water Governance in Thailand and Beyond

9:00 – 16:45 (ICT), 31st May 2022

Online event: Join Zoom

here: <https://chula.zoom.us/j/95373038221?pwd=VGVsSnpVVTJWWStyQzNiMko2NC9WUT09>
Meeting ID: 953 7303 8221 Password: 150026

The Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development, Chiang Mai
University (RCSD)

Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute (CUSRI)

Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, Chulalongkorn University

Center for Social Development Studies, Chulalongkorn University (CSDS)

College of Politics and Governance, Mahasarakham University

Faculty of Science and Social Sciences, Burapha University Sakaeo Campus

Simultaneous Thai-English translation will be available

Historically until the present day, rivers are central features in rural and urban community culture and livelihoods in Thailand, including for agricultural practices, fishing and harvesting other aquatic and wetland resources, and transportation. In recent decades, rivers in Thailand have been transformed by accelerating processes of economic modernization, including by the construction and operation of large-scale water infrastructures such as irrigation schemes and hydropower dams as human demand for water for agriculture, industry, hydroelectricity and domestic consumption has grown. Large-scale water infrastructure has progressively transformed river basins at the local to basin-wide scale, bringing benefits to some and harm to others. Transformations have also occurred in terms of how water is governed, with earlier community governance practices being replaced by more centralized management in river basin organizations and at the national level.

The difficulty of reconciling healthy rivers and sustainable development is not unique to Thailand. Globally, the challenges for rivers are profound, which range from the declining biodiversity of increasingly modified river systems, to declining water quality due to polluting human activity, to the impacts of climate change. Recent academic and civil society research conducted in Thailand has drawn attention to how multiple worldviews underpin contrasting visions for rivers and their role in ‘development.’ This mirrors a comparable recognition in some other regions of the world where the diverse meanings and values of rivers have been viewed as important to governing water and creating policies towards achieving just and inclusive development. These approaches have ranged from revitalizing the commons, to critical reflections on the ‘nexus’ between water, food and energy, to recognizing the ‘rights of rivers.’

The purpose of this seminar is to share recent research on the water policy and practices and its impacts especially on community livelihoods and culture in Thailand, and to contextualize the findings by engaging in discussion with innovative approaches beyond Thailand.

Agenda

9:00 – 9:10

Welcome remarks

*Prof. Surichai Wun'gao, Center for Peace and Conflict Studies,
Chulalongkorn University*

9:10 – 10:25

Understanding water governance in Thailand

“A feminist political ecology of water governance in Thailand”
Assoc. Prof. Kanokwan Manorom, Ubon Ratchathani University

“Rethinking and rescaling the river commons in Thailand and the
Mekong Region”
Prof. Philip Hirsch, University of Sydney

“Multiple world views and water conflict in Thailand: An overview”
*Ms. Jitraporn Somyanontanakul, College of Politics and Governance,
Mahasarakham University*

“The ontological politics of waters in Northern Thailand: a hydrosocial
analysis of the Ing River Basin”
Mr Thianchai Surimas, Chulalongkorn University

Moderator: Asst. Prof. Dr. Piyatida Ruangrassamee,
Faculty of Engineering, Chulalongkorn University

10:25 – 10:45

Screen break

10:45 – 12:00

Contemporary water governance in Thailand

“The politics of water governance in community water distribution/
management: Implications from local communities’ practices in Surin
and Chiangrai, Thailand”
*Dr Yuppayao Tokeeree, Program of Environmental Science, Faculty of
Science and Technology, Surindra Rajabhat University*
*Dr Chuanpit Jara, Program of Environmental Science, Faculty of
Science and Technology, Surindra Rajabhat University*
*Mr Seabsakul Kidnukorn, Area-based Social Innovation Research
Center (Ab-SIRC), The School of Social Innovation, Mae Fah Luang
University*

“The human right to access water resources for livelihoods: A case
study in the eastern area of Thailand”
Dr Somnuck Jongmeewasin, Research Director, EEC WATCH
*Dr Jakkaphun Nanuam, Faculty of Science and Social Sciences,
Burapha University*

“Water governance and local voice: The case of Yuam River
Water Diversion Project”

Asst. Prof. Dr. Malee Sitthikriengkrai, Chiang Mai University
Mr Thianchai Surimas, Chulalongkorn University

“Not only Anti-dam: Simplistic Rendering of Complex Salween Communities in Their Negotiation for Development in Thailand”

Dr. Paiboon Hengsuwan, Chiang Mai University

Moderator: *Dr. Lertchai Sirichai, Independent Scholar*

11:40 – 12:00

Plenary Q&A

12:00 – 13:00

Lunch

13:00 – 14:30

Contextualizing Thailand’s water governance

“The ‘closure’ of the Chao Phraya basin: Why a change of mindset is needed”

Prof. Francois Molle, Institut de Recherche pour le Développement

“From IWRM to the Water-Food-Energy Nexus: Old Wine in a New Bottle?”

Dr. Dipak Gyawali, Pragya (Academician), Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST)

“Disaster governance, floods, and the scalar politics of incomplete decentralization in Thailand”

Asst. Prof. Dr Danny Marks, School of Law and Government, Dublin City University

Moderator: *Assoc.Prof. Dr. Kanongnij Sribuaiam, Faculty of Law, Chulalongkorn University*

14:30 – 14:50

Screen break

14:50 – 16:00

What next for water policy in Thailand?

Mr. Atthapong Chantanumate
National Water Resources Committee, Thailand (NWRC)

Asst. Prof. Dr. Sitang Pilailar, Department of Water Resources Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, Kasetsart University

Dr. Chayanis Krittasudthacheewa, Stockholm Environment Institute-Asia

Chairperson: Prof. Chayan Vaddhanaphuti, Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development, Chiang Mai University

16:00 – 16:30

Plenary Q&A

16:30 – 16:45

Concluding remarks

*Prof. Surichai Wun'gaeo, Center for Peace and Conflict Studies,
Chulalongkorn University*